IN THE CLAIMS

The following is a complete listing of the claims, and replaces all earlier versions and listings.

1.   (Currently Amended) An image input apparatus comprising:

a photoelectric conversion ~~means for acquiring~~ unit adapted to acquire image information of an object ~~and outputting signals~~ from a plurality of divided areas and to output signals from each of a plurality of output units corresponding to respective ones of the areas, wherein each of the areas includes an effective pixel portion and a non-image pixel portion; and

a correcting ~~means for and correcting~~ unit adapted to correct offset components contained in the signals output from ~~said photoelectric conversion means components, wherein said correcting means adjusts a fluctuation of the offset components generated during~~ each of the output units during a period of acquiring the image information, in accordance with a first signal output from the effective pixel portion during a period other than the image information acquiring, a second signal output from the non-image pixel portion during the period other than the image information acquiring, and a third signal output from the non-image pixel portion during the period of acquiring image information.

2.   (Canceled)

- 2 -

3.　　　(Currently Amended)　An image input apparatus according to claim [[2]] 1, wherein the signals from the plurality of areas are [[read]] output separately to right and left directions respectively.

4.　　　(Currently Amended) An image input apparatus according to claim [[2]] 1, wherein the offset components include a level difference of the signals between the areas output from the plurality of divided areas.

5.　　　(Currently Amended) An image input apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said correcting [[means]] unit includes:

calculating means for calculating the fluctuation of the offset components in accordance with the signal output from said photoelectric conversion means during the image information acquiring a subtracting unit adapted to subtract the offset components from the signals output from the plurality of areas of said photoelectric conversion unit during the period of acquiring the image information;

subtracting means for subtracting the offset components from the signal output from said photoelectric conversion means a calculating unit adapted to calculate the fluctuation of the offset components in accordance with the second and third signals; and

an adjusting means for adjusting unit adapted to adjust the offset components to be subtracted by said subtracting [[means]] unit, in accordance with an output signal from said calculating [[means]] unit.

6.   (Currently Amended) An image input apparatus according to claim [[5]] 1, ~~wherein the offset components are a signal output from said photoelectric conversion means during a period other than the image information acquiring, and contain an average value obtained through addition of signals of the areas and averaging thereof~~ wherein the first, second, and third signals are obtained through addition of signals of the areas and averaging thereof.

7 and 8.   (Canceled)

9.   (Currently Amended) An image input apparatus according to claim 5, wherein adjusting of the offset components by said adjusting [[means]] unit is executed during [[the]] a period other than the image information acquiring.

10. - 29.   (Canceled)

30.   (Currently Amended) An image processing method of processing signals output from photoelectric conversion ~~means for acquiring~~ unit adapted to acquire image information of an object ~~and outputting the signals, said method comprising a step of~~ from a plurality of divided areas and to output the signals from each of a plurality of output units corresponding to respective ones of the areas, wherein each of the areas includes an effective pixel portion and a non-image pixel portion, said method comprising:

~~correcting offset components contained in the signals output from~~
~~said photoelectric conversion means, wherein said correcting step includes a step of~~
~~adjusting a fluctuation of the offset components generated during acquiring image~~
~~information~~ correcting offset components contained in the signals output from each of the output units during a period of acquiring the image information, in accordance with a first signal output from the effective pixel portion during a period other than the image information acquiring, a second signal output from the non-image pixel portion during the period other than the image information acquiring, and a third signal output from the non-image pixel portion during the period of acquiring image information.

31 and 32.   (Canceled)

33.   (Currently Amended) A storage medium storing a program for processing signals output from a photoelectric conversion ~~means for acquiring~~ unit adapted to acquire image information of an object ~~and outputting the signals, said program comprising~~ from a plurality of divided areas and to output the signals from each of a plurality of output units corresponding to respective ones of the areas, wherein each of the areas includes an effective pixel portion and a non-image pixel portion, said program comprising:

a code of correcting offset components contained in the signals output from ~~said photoelectric conversion means, wherein said code includes a code of adjusting a fluctuation of the offset components generated during~~ each of the output units

- 5 -

during a period of acquiring the image information, in accordance with a first signal output from the effective pixel portion during a period other than the image information acquiring, a second signal output from the non-image pixel portion during the period other than the image information acquiring, and a third signal output from the non-image pixel portion during the period of acquiring image information.

34. - 36.   (Canceled)

37.   (New) An image input apparatus comprising:

a photoelectric conversion unit adapted to acquire image information of an object from a plurality of divided areas and output signals from each of a plurality of output units corresponding to respective ones of the areas, wherein each of the areas includes an effective pixel portion and a non-image pixel portion; and

a correcting unit adapted to correct offset components contained in the signals output from each of the output units during a period of acquiring image information, in accordance with a first signal output from the effective pixel portion during a period other than the image information acquiring, a second signal output from the non-image pixel portion during the period of acquiring the image information, and an average of the second signal.

38. (New) An image input apparatus according to claim 37, wherein the signals from the plurality of areas are output separately to right and left directions respectively.

39. (New) An image input apparatus according to claim 37, wherein the offset components include a level difference of the signals between the areas output from the plurality of divided areas.

40. (New) An image input apparatus according to claim 37, wherein said correcting unit includes:

a subtracting unit adapted to subtract the offset components from the signals output from the plurality of areas of said photoelectric conversion unit during the period of acquiring the image information;

a calculating unit adapted to calculate the fluctuation of the offset components in accordance with the second and third signals; and

an adjusting unit adapted to adjust the offset components to be subtracted by said subtracting unit, in accordance with an output signal from said calculating unit.

41. (New) An image input apparatus according to claim 37, wherein the first, second, and third signals are obtained through addition of signals of the areas and averaging thereof.

42.   (New) An image input apparatus according to claim 40, wherein adjusting of the offset components by said adjusting unit is executed during a period other than the image information acquiring.

43.   (New) An image processing method of processing signals output from a photoelectric conversion unit adapted to acquire image Information of an object from a plurality of divided areas and output the signals from each of a plurality of output units corresponding to respective ones of the areas, wherein each of the areas includes an effective pixel portion and a non-image pixel portion, said method comprising:

correcting offset components contained in the signals output from each of the output units during a period of acquiring image information, in accordance with a first signal output from the effective pixel portion during a period other than the image information acquiring, a second signal output from the non-image pixel portion during the period of acquiring the image information, and an average of the second signal.

44.   (New) A storage medium storing a program for processing signals output from a photoelectric conversion unit adapted to acquire image information of an object from a plurality of divided areas and output the signals from each of a plurality of output units corresponding to respective ones of the areas, wherein each of the areas includes an effective pixel portion and a non-image pixel portion, said program comprising:

a code of correcting offset components contained in the signals output from each of the output units during a period of acquiring image information, in accordance with a first signal output from the effective pixel portion during a period other than the image information acquiring, a second signal output from the non-image pixel portion during the period of acquiring the image information, and an average of the second signal.